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AAI/Zogby Poll on Arab American Experiences and Identity Shows Increase in Discrimination Among Young Arab Americans *More Than Three-Quarters of Young Arab Americans Report Discrimination*

WASHINGTON – July 16, 2007 – The Arab American Institute (AAI) today released the results of a poll offering insight into Arab American experiences with discrimination, views on whether U.S. policy is respectful toward Islam, and pride in Arab American heritage. The poll, titled “Arab Americans: How We See Ourselves” and conducted by Zogby International, surveyed 501 Arab Americans nationwide from May 22 to 26 and has a margin of error of $\pm 4.5\%$.

The full report is available on AAI’s website at www.aaiusa.org.

Three Out Of Four Young Arab Americans Report Discrimination

Experiences of discrimination are not uniform within the Arab American community, with 76% of young Arab Americans (18 to 29 years old) and 58% of Arab American Muslims reporting that they have “personally experienced discrimination in the past because of [their] ethnicity,” as opposed to 42% of respondents overall (Table 1).

Comparisons with previous AAI polls in which this same question was asked indicate a rise in experiences of discrimination amongst young Arab Americans. In a June 2003 poll, 38% of young Arab Americans reported having “personally experienced discrimination in the past because of [their] ethnicity.” In a January 2004 poll, 65% of young Arab Americans responded in the affirmative to the question.

Youth Less Pessimistic About Long-Term Effects

Even though young Arab Americans are more likely to have personally experienced discrimination, they are less concerned about the long-term effects of discrimination against Arab Americans. Of overall respondents, 57% responded that they were either “very worried” or “somewhat worried” about the “long-term effects of discrimination against Arab Americans.” 48% of Arab Americans between ages 18 and 29 were either “very worried” or “somewhat worried” (Table 2).

The overall percentage of Arab Americans who are “very worried” or “somewhat worried” has remained steady since AAI asked the question in an October 2001 poll, falling just three points from 60%. The percentage of young Arab Americans responding they were “very worried” or “somewhat worried” has dropped markedly, though: from 85% in the October 2001 poll; to 78% in an October 2002 poll; to 73% in a July 2003 poll, to 69% in a January 2004 poll; to 48% in this poll.

Other Findings

Arab Americans overall were split on their agreement with the statement “U.S. policy demonstrates respect toward the Islamic faith,” but respondents between 18 and 29 and Muslim respondents were far more likely to disagree. 67% of the 18 to 29 age group disagreed and 68% of Muslim Arab Americans disagreed (Table 3).

Pride in heritage compared to ten years ago has risen most among Arab Americans between 18 and 29, with 47% responding that they have more pride in their heritage today, as opposed to just 11% who have less pride (Table 4).

Table 1: Experience with Discrimination

Have you personally experienced discrimination in the past because of your ethnicity?

	Overall	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+	U.S. Born	Not U.S. Born	Cath	Pro	Muslim
Yes	42	45	33	47	76	31	42	41	29	45	58
No	58	55	67	52	23	69	58	58	71	54	42

Table 2: Concern over Long-Term Discrimination Effects

How worried are you about the long-term effects of discrimination against Arab Americans?

	Overall	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+	U.S. Born	Not U.S. Born	Cath	Pro	Muslim
Very Worried	20	10	13	25	14	22	17	26	17	13	26
Somewhat Worried	37	44	32	33	34	34	38	36	34	37	38
Not Worried	43	36	54	43	49	44	45	35	49	49	33
Not Sure	1	<1	--	<1	4	<1	<1	3	<1	1	2

Table 3: U.S. Policy Respectful of Islam

Please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement: U.S. policy currently demonstrates respect toward the Islamic faith?

	Overall	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+	U.S. Born	Not U.S. Born	Cath	Pro	Muslim
Strongly Agree	26	19	49	18	13	28	27	24	31	32	14
Somewhat Agree	18	22	14	15	18	15	17	22	16	25	16
Agree	44	41	63	33	31	43	44	46	47	57	30
Somewhat Disagree	22	22	13	29	41	13	24	19	21	10	38
Strongly Disagree	27	30	20	28	26	28	25	31	23	25	30
Disagree	49	52	33	57	67	41	49	50	44	35	68
Not Sure	7	7	5	10	2	16	8	4	10	9	2

Table 4: Pride in Arab American Heritage vs. 10 Years Ago

Would you say you are more proud, less proud, or have the same amount of pride in being an Arab American as you did ten years ago?

	Overall	Dem	Rep	Ind	18-29	65+	U.S. Born	Not U.S. Born	Cath	Pro	Muslim
More Pride	26	26	22	32	47	31	26	29	26	18	42
Less Pride	17	21	15	14	11	13	17	21	17	17	20
Same Pride	51	50	60	45	36	48	52	45	51	59	33
Not Sure	6	3	3	10	6	8	6	6	6	5	5

Survey Methodology

This is a telephone survey of Arab Americans nationwide conducted by Zogby International, May 22 through May 26, 2007. The target sample is 501 interviews with approximately 38 questions asked. Samples are randomly drawn over national Congressional Districts using Zogby International's list of Arab surnames. Zogby International surveys employ sampling strategies in which selection probabilities are proportional to population size within area codes and exchanges. Up to six calls are made to reach a sampled phone number.

Cooperation rates are calculated using one of AAPOR's approved methodologies and are comparable to other professional public-opinion surveys conducted using similar sampling strategies. Weighting by country of origin, religion, born in US, age and gender is used to adjust for non-response. The margin of error is +/- 4.5 percentage points. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

Zogby International's sampling and weighting procedures also have been validated through its political polling: more than 95% of the firm's polls have come within 1% of actual election-day outcomes.

About the Arab American Institute

Founded in 1985, the Arab American Institute (AAI) is a nonprofit organization committed to the civic and political empowerment of Americans of Arab descent. AAI provides policy, research and public affairs services to support a broad range of community activities. For more information on AAI, please visit www.aaiusa.org or call 202-429-9210.